

[From Politico, Nov. 17, 2013]

EMBRACING HER OLD KENTUCKY HOME

(By Elaine Chao)

Deep in the heart of Kentucky's rugged Eastern Mountain region there lives a woman who has fascinated and inspired me for two decades. She is known locally these days as "Mayor Nan"—the octogenarian chief executive of Hazard and advocate for its 5,467 residents.

Nan Gorman was born in Memphis, Tenn., on St. Patrick's Day. She moved to Hazard in 1929 when her father, James Hagan, a recent medical school graduate and aspiring surgeon, went to work there. The stock market was about to crash and soon the Great Depression would be under way and take a brutal toll on the rural mountain economy. In the early days, her father was often paid for his services with chickens and eggs. Later, her father became chief surgeon for the region at the Hazard Hospital.

Hazard was not just small but remote because of the lack of roads in the region so the Hagan family, with little Nan in tow, traveled there from Tennessee via Virginia mountain passes. Nan's parents, who she says still inspire and guide her today, ensured that she had a good education and gave her the opportunity to attend college but, as was prevalent then, expected that she would soon settle down as a young woman, marry and have children.

She eventually did all that, but not until after she had experienced some of the world far from Hazard and her beloved eastern Kentucky mountains that she says "are like the arms of a mother around us." So enraptured was she with the natural beauty around Hazard that she became an artist to record scenes in pencil, ink, watercolors and oil paints.

After World War II, Nan graduated from the University of Cincinnati and attended the prestigious Parsons School of Design in New York City. With an adventurous spirit, Nan flew to Egypt by herself to study ancient history and then traveled on for solo explorations of Greece, Rome, Paris and London. Having been exposed to such exotic, vibrant cities so full of opportunity, one could hardly have begrudged a choice to make her life elsewhere. But instead, she chose to come home to Kentucky. She got an apartment in Lexington and worked as a freelance artist drawing advertisements for clothing stores, doing architectural renderings and sketching historical landmarks. One day she saw a classified advertisement in which the state was looking for a full-time artist, and she subsequently became the first one ever employed by the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Among her tasks was designing the state seal—United We Stand, Divided We Fall—which is still in use today.

At age 50, Nan settled again in Hazard, remarried—to her high school sweetheart, Bill, and together they formed a partnership that would have a lasting impact on virtually every sphere of the community. Bill was elected mayor in 1978, served for 35 years and never accepted a salary. When he returned home to the Lord three years ago, Nan asked that donations go to a fund to benefit local public schools. Wishing to continue Bill's legacy of service to the community, Nan was subsequently elected mayor as a write-in candidate, winning by a 3-to-1 margin.

Nan's governing personal ethic is to constantly strive to do better for Hazard's residents for as long as she can. When last I spoke with her, Nan was alternately expressing pride over a young local girl's success overcoming disadvantages, helping with the Appalachian Regional Hospital's fundraising campaign and her efforts to obtain refrigerators for families in need.

An octogenarian well-deserving of retirement, Mayor Nan instead toils from sunrise to late in the evening on behalf of her town. She takes pleasure in the people and the mountain scenery and loves nothing more than to watch wildlife in her yard or to hear that some good fortune is improving someone's life. My takeaway from every visit with Nan is appreciation for the big difference that one woman in a little town can make.

RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY OF PIKEVILLE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a venerable institution of higher learning from my home State of Kentucky the University of Pikeville. UPike, as it is more commonly known, is celebrating 125 years of educating young minds on its campus in eastern Kentucky.

September 16 marked 125 years since the first classes were held at what was then called Pikeville Collegiate Institute. The college was founded by a group of Presbyterians, and has maintained its religious foundation ever since.

In addition to its religious background, UPike has also always maintained a strong commitment to its community. The university invests deeply in the Appalachian region through community service projects, humanitarian efforts, and its educational offerings. As former President Hal Smith remarked at the anniversary ceremony, UPike's mission has always been "to provide educational opportunity for the youth and adults of this region."

Three other former presidents, as well as the current President Dr. James Hurley, were in attendance Tuesday for the ceremony. During the ceremony, Dr. Hurley announced a campaign to raise \$75 million for the university. It is a fitting endeavor to ensure many more years of excellence in education at the University of Pikeville.

I now ask that my Senate colleagues join me in paying tribute to the University of Pikeville's 125 years of excellence in education.

WYMT Mountain News recently published an article detailing the University of Pikeville's 125th anniversary ceremonies. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

UNIVERSITY OF PIKEVILLE KICKS OFF 125TH ANNIVERSARY BY HONORING FOUR FORMER PRESIDENTS

(By Hillary Thornton)

PIKEVILLE, KY. (WYMT).—Four former University of Pikeville presidents were on hand for a ceremony that was all about honoring their past and celebrating their future. As Tuesday marks 125 years since the first class was held at the Pikeville Collegiate Institute . . . now known as UPike.

Opening convocation officially starts the school year, however this year also marks the 125th anniversary.

Through all those years, the many additions and changes . . . all agree the mission of the institution remains the same.

Former President Hal Smith (1997–2009) says, "To provide educational opportunity for the youth and adults of this region."

President James Hurley calls it a very surreal day, as he honors four past presidents with honorary degrees from the institution they say continues to break barriers and exceed expectations.

Smith says, "Each of us laid a little bit of a foundation for the things that are happening and clearly I think the future is very, very bright."

To help ensure another 125 years of success at UPike, Dr. Hurley announced a \$75 million comprehensive capital campaign.

"Investing in the future of Central Appalachia . . . with the decline in the coal industry we have to think about a new economy, an economy based on education," explains Hurley. He adds, "That is going to be our focus . . . we are going to raise 75 million dollars to invest in new infrastructure."

KYCOM student Fritz Stine says, "I think this definitely shows that we are moving in this trajectory and we are spearheading the future of the area."

"Working to honor their past, while planning for and celebrating their future."

COMPETITIVE PAY FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, of the 21 million veterans in our country, about 750,000 live in Illinois. I hear from many of them as I travel around the State meeting with different groups. Like veterans throughout the United States, Illinois veterans are concerned about their health care. They are frustrated by lengthy wait times to get an appointment and, like all of us, they are furious about the wait list scandal uncovered this year. One factor that has contributed to the long wait times is a shortage of medical personnel at VA hospitals and clinics. In many cases there are not enough doctors and nurses to meet demand. Many of the doctors and nurses we do have are overwhelmed.

One way we can address this is to give VA doctors and nurses a raise. I am happy that VA Secretary Bob McDonald announced this morning the agency is going to lift a salary freeze on medical personnel and plans to increase compensation for the health care providers who work with our veterans. This is a positive step in improving the ailing Veterans Health Administration.

Salaries for VA doctors and nurses often are lower on average than those of their private sector counterparts, and those salaries have been frozen for 3 years. Primary care doctors and internists at VA facilities earned about 33 percent less than private sector primary care physicians in 2012, according to the Medical Group Management Association. A similar disparity can be found in nurses' pay.

Last week Secretary McDonald testified at a Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing that the VA needs about 28,000 new medical staffers—doctors, nurses, other care providers, and